

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

181714Z Jan 06

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000060

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2015

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: OIL WORKER HOSTAGE UPDATE SITREP #6

REF: A. ABUJA 76

[1](#)B. LAGOS 54 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Acting Consul General William H. Howe for Reasons 1.4 (D
& E)

Threats Against Oil Companies Continue

[1](#)1. (C) At 7:45am January 18, an anonymous caller threatened Shell's Surfer-141 boat, which guards the Floating Production, Storage, and Offloading (FPSO) vessel "Sea Eagle" and was chased in the January 11 attack. The caller identified himself as the "son of the chief;" however, Shell's most likely suspect, a leader in one of their local communities named Chief Deka, claimed innocence. In response, Shell moved the "Surfer-141" as well as the "Viking Thauamas," another support craft. The FPSO is now guarded by the NNS "Nwama." The Nigerian Navy was supposed to provide another ship, the "P-219," but the ship was reportedly delayed by a skirmish at Jacob Creek, where consulate information had indicated an unspecified attack would happen.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) released another threat against Chevron facilities, specifically, and all expat workers and oil companies in general. The letter, e-mailed to Reuters chief correspondent Tom Ashby, claims that the group will attack expats in the cities and that it "knows where their children go to school and where they shop."

[1](#)3. (C) A Chevron security advisor disclosed that Shell had "been visited" by militant youths at their Ashide facility north of Escravos. The youths extorted food, water, and cash from employees. This facility is in Shell's Western Area oil field in Delta State.

[1](#)4. (C) Chevron, he said, considered the violence to be "not Chevron's fight," and he said the government was concentrating its search for the militants and hostages on an area between Escravos and Forcados. Chevron changed its security position from a "pragmatic production posture" to a "guarded operational posture." The company also settled a long-standing labor dispute with the senior oil workers union, PENGASSON, according to acting union president Peter Esele.

Shell, Tidex, Ecodrill Continue to Spar Over Hostages

[1](#)5. (C) Tidex and Ecodrill Managing Directors and a Senior Vice-President of Tidewater USA approached consulate and British Deputy High Commission (BDHC) officials with the request that they help solve the hostage crisis independently of Shell. They claimed that Shell had told them unequivocally the hostages were their problem and that they did not feature high on the priority list for Shell.

[1](#)6. (C) Shell Emergency Response Team Commander Frank Mihlon said the company expected Tidex and Ecodrill to take the lead in any eventual ransom payments or other arrangements for the release of the hostages. He said Shell would continue to help with logistics and advice from a new command center established in Warri. Shell is bringing a London-based security advisor to Warri for this purpose.

Shell Changes Tack, Asks for Larger USG and UK Role

17. (C) Shell initially wanted no involvement on the part of the USG and UK but on January 18 officially requested both governments to lobby the GON for more transparency and urgency in resolving the hostage crisis. Shell indicated they had not yet heard from the new committee created by the President to deal with the situation. The committee is led by the Governor of Bayelsa State and the Minister of Petroleum.

18. (C) In response, the BDHC is sending their Deputy High Commissioner and a team of Scotland Yard negotiators to Bayelsa State on January 19. FBI will also send a negotiator by January 20 to join the British team. The negotiators will initially assist Tidex and Ecodrill, as all parties have agreed that Shell should not make any statements to the kidnappers for the present.

Hostage Welfare Update

19. (SBU) ConGen Lagos acquired a copy of the Reuters interview with the four hostages. Amcit Patrick Landry sounded ill on the tape and did not speak for long. He requested that the USG find a way to get him out of his current situation as quickly as possible. Attempts to get his blood pressure medication to him through either the Reuters journalist or GON negotiators have not yet succeeded.

Shell Releases Casualty and Evacuee Totals

10. (SBU) As of January 17, Shell released the following figures: 15 dead (14 military, 1 civilian); 552 evacuees (350 from the Southern Swamp area and 202 from the Northern Swamp). The company plans to reassess its staffing at Forcados Terminal and to remove the remaining 6 staff from their Odidi flowstation.
HOWE